

AGN. NO. _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS ZEV YAROSLAVSKY AND
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Between 1997 and 2005, the obesity rate among adults in Los Angeles County increased by nearly 50%. The most recent *Key Indicators of Health* report by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has found that among 5th, 7th, and 9th graders attending public schools in the county, nearly one in four were obese. Adults who are obese are at increased risk for a host of chronic diseases, including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and cancer. Children who are obese are more likely to be obese as adults, and are also at increased risk for developing hypertension, high blood cholesterol levels, and type 2 diabetes during childhood and as adults.

Over the past several decades, the trajectory of the obesity epidemic has been mirrored by the growth in consumption of restaurant meals. During this period, so-called "super-sizing" of food and beverage portions at restaurants has become widespread, particularly at fast food and other large restaurant franchises. Frequent consumption of meals at fast food restaurants has been associated with excess weight gain in both children and adults. Researchers for the 2005 Los Angeles County Health Survey found that one in four children aged 2-17 had eaten fast food in the preceding 24 hours.

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Studies have shown that most people, including nutritionists, greatly underestimate the caloric content of restaurant menu items. While calorie and other nutrition information is required to be posted on packaged food products, such information is rarely available at the point of purchase in restaurants. A recent study by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health indicates that mandated posting of calorie information on menus and menu boards at fast food and other franchise restaurants is an important strategy for combating the obesity epidemic. The study has found that if just 10% of restaurant patrons ordered reduced calorie meals (with an average reduction of 100 calories per meal) as a result of calorie information provided on menus, it would result in a 39% decrease in weight gain among County residents. An even larger impact would be realized with public education efforts to increase the percentage of restaurant patrons who order reduced calorie meals.

Menu labeling shows great promise as an alternative strategy for reducing the obesity rate as well as the financial and human costs associated with diet-related disease. For this reason, several jurisdictions including New York City, King County of Washington, the City and County of San Francisco, and Santa Clara County have adopted menu labeling ordinances. Pending legislation at the state level (SB 1420 - Padilla), would require chain restaurants with 15 or more outlets in California to post calorie and other nutritional information on menus. Until such time as the state enacts SB 1420 or comparable legislation, Los Angeles County should seize the opportunity to develop a menu labeling ordinance that will allow restaurant patrons and consumers to make informed decisions at the point of sale at any one of approximately 300 to 350 franchise restaurants operating within the unincorporated areas.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1) instruct County Counsel, in conjunction with the Department of Public Health, to develop an ordinance requiring that each food facility in the unincorporated area that operates under common ownership or control with at least 14 other food facilities with the same name in the state that offer for sale substantially the same menu items, or operates as a franchised outlet of a parent company with at least 14 other franchised outlets with the same name in the state that offer for sale substantially the same menu items, shall post nutritional and caloric information for all standard menu items on menus and menu boards; and report back for the Board's consideration within 30 days,

2) include within the ordinance a license fee, if necessary, for the enforcement of the menu labeling program, and

3) instruct the Executive Officer of the Board, with the assistance of the Director of Public Health, to send five-signature letters to the Mayors and City Managers of all 88 incorporated cities within Los Angeles County, encouraging them to consider the development and adoption of similar menu labeling ordinances.